

Special Town Meeting November 16, 2016

The Special Town Meeting was called to order at 7:30 p.m. by the First Selectman, Rudy Marconi, in the Town Hall large conference room.

Mr. Marconi asked the audience to recite the Pledge of Allegiance. After the pledge, Mr. Marconi stated that the first order of business was to elect a Moderator. Maureen Kozlark made a motion, and it was seconded to nominate Jane Berendsen-Hill as Moderator.

Vote: "Aye" votes unanimous, and Mrs. Hill was elected Moderator.

The Moderator then explained that the meeting was to approve the changes in the Ridgefield Code under Chapter 274; Article II: Peddling and Soliciting. She further explained that the notice of the meeting was lengthy, but would entertain a motion to waive the reading of it. John Katz, Ridgebury Rd. made a motion to waive the reading, and Dave Cronin, 10 Lawson Lane seconded.

Vote: "Aye" votes unanimous, and the reading of the notice was waived.

Mrs. Hill asked for a motion to accept the ordinance, as written. Maureen Kozlark made the motion, and it was seconded by James Coyle.

Discussion: Mr. Marconi gave a quick review. He stated that the changes were a result of many months of discussions and public hearings. He said that the real body of the changes was in Section 274-6 & 274-8, the mobile food operations. In summary, two existing locations will be grandfathered in, 456 Main St. and 296 Ethan Allen Highway. He also reported that ice cream trucks will still be allowed, and permit schedules will remain the same. He said that the reason for the changes was to tighten things up, and that many communities have looked into the food truck locations, and are trying to endorse some control of the food trucks to save downtown restaurant businesses. In addition, it will help the safety and welfare of the town. Mr. Marconi also spoke on how organizations are restricted in soliciting neighborhoods after dusk, because of the large senior component in Town; however, the town is not allowed to do this with 501 (c) (3) 's.

David Grogins, Town Attorney, agreed with Mr. Marconi that the changes were made to tighten up the ordinance.

A member of the audience from 28 Branchville West asked if the ordinance covers subleasing. Mr. Marconi replied that any assignment needs approval of the Board of Selectmen. She also asked how often does a person have to license. Mr. Marconi replied that it has to be validated every year.

Jeremy Tucci, 12 Lafayette Ave., stated he did not understand the ordinance, but he felt it was putting the financial security of Mark McManus, a food truck owner, at risk. Mr. Marconi explained that previously, Mr. McManus had requested a permit for only Parks & Recreation and special events. He was told that if he wanted something permanent, he would have to go back to the Board of Selectmen. There was never a request for a permanent location. The location on which Mr. McManus was located was on Rt. 35. That location had been rejected before for another vendor, because there was the issue of ingress and egress and high traffic volume at that location. Mr. Marconi made it clear that the ordinance was not against any individual.

There was no further discussion, and the Moderator called for a hand vote.

Vote: In favor, 11 votes; Opposed, 8 votes. The ordinance was approved.

Maureen Kozlark moved, and it was seconded by Steve Zemo to adjourn the meeting.

Vote: "Aye" votes unanimous, and the meeting adjourned at 7:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Barbara Serfilippi, Town Clerk